

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 9 NOVEMBER 2011

**TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS (TRO) AND THE
WEST LOUGHBOROUGH PARKING PROJECT**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

The Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to inform Scrutiny Commission, in answer to questions raised by Mr M. Hunt CC, of the work currently being undertaken to develop the Traffic Regulation Order process and the changes to the E & T Departmental structure to allow a more strategic approach to traffic management in the county.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP) was adopted in April 2011. The new policy focus from LTP3 requires a new approach to traffic management in the County. The change in approach centres on making the best use of the existing network and a move away from planning to build more capacity. This requires a move away from reactive interventions to a more strategic, policy led, approach to traffic and network management.

Background

3. Question submitted to the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission by Mr M. Hunt CC, in September 2011:

"Would the Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission and his fellow Commissioners please consider how Scrutiny can best examine the time and project management of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) which often take much elapsed time, which is not always well understood by the public or elected members?"

Could this examination focus in particular on TROs for Residents Parking Zones and use as a case study the West Loughborough Parking project, which has only just completed its formal consultation after over three years in gestation?"

4. Mr. Galton CC replied as follows:

"The Scrutiny Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and the Chairmen, Vice Chairmen and Spokesmen of the two Overview and Scrutiny

Committees met recently (11 July) to consider potential issues for inclusion in the work programmes of Scrutiny bodies for the period up to January 2012. I note that Mr Hunt was unable to attend this meeting but had the opportunity to submit ideas/suggestions.

The Scrutiny Commissioners meet regularly to review the Overview and Scrutiny work programme and I will ensure that this request is considered by them. Their conclusions will be reported to the Scrutiny Commission in due course."

Traffic Regulation Orders

5. The implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) is a statutory process governed by The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The current TRO process is considered to be expensive and time consuming, with all schemes, including minor ones, subject to the same lengthy process. Simple and non-controversial TRO, which receive no objections, can take 10-12 months to process, controversial schemes can take 2 to 3 years to complete. With the typical costs of an individual TRO being in the region £7000.
6. Through work with Midlands Service Improvement Group (MSIG), it has been identified that TRO implementation times and costs could be reduced by streamlining the current TRO process. A number of authorities, including Derbyshire County Council and Nottingham City Council, have already adopted a streamlined approach to the implementation of TRO, which has reduced implementation times and costs.
7. A review of the TRO process is currently being undertaken by the E & T Traffic Management Team and Legal Services. The aim of the review is to determine whether the adoption of a streamlined TRO process in the County would produce reduced implementation times and overall implementation costs. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by February 2012.

Loughborough West Parking Study

8. The Loughborough West Parking Study (LWPS) was developed from a series of meetings involving County and Borough Councilors, residents' representatives, the Police and Loughborough University, that took place during 2007/8. The meetings highlighted particular parking concerns in the vicinity of the university campus. The study had two primary aims. Firstly, to develop a strategic approach to resolving parking issues within the study area. Secondly, to inform the development of a strategic approach to the parking concerns elsewhere in Leicestershire.
9. The detailed study work, which commenced in summer 2008, took a holistic approach towards the complex parking issues in the area, with the aim of identifying a range of interventions that could be used to overcome

the problems in the area. It did not start with the specific aim of implementing TRO to install residents' parking zones in the area.

10. The level of staff resources available to undertake the study work and subsequent scheme development was severely limited and had to be fitted in around competing demands on staff time. This, coupled with the complexity of competing parking demands in the area, has made it particularly difficult to develop a scheme that addresses those competing demands and is acceptable to local residents. A fact which is further demonstrated by the 714 objections that have been received in response to the recent public consultation on the proposals for the area.
11. The lack of resources available for undertaking major parking or traffic management study work has been recognised and is being addressed through the on-going E & T departmental reorganisation. The revised traffic management function is being centralised into a single team and extra staff resources are being moved into this area of work. In addition to this, there will be a move away from reactive work to a more strategic approach to traffic and network management, requiring a greater emphasis on area and route based studies. The detailed approach to this study work is still being developed and will incorporate the lessons learnt through the LWPS.

Conclusion

12. The Commission is asked to note the content of the report and a further report will be presented to the Commission in March/April 2012 detailing the outcome of the TRO process review and the future approach to strategic traffic management and parking studies.

Background Papers

West Loughborough Parking Study Interim Report, Highways Forum for Charnwood, 16th July 2008.

Circulation Under Sensitive Issues Procedures

None.

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